



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

55 MAIN STREET • P.O. BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

www.ellington-ct.gov

TEL. (860) 870-3120

TOWN PLANNER'S OFFICE

FAX (860) 870-3122

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES MAY 8, 2013

PRESENT: Chairman Sean Kelly, Vice Chairman Chris Todd, David Hurley, Stanislav Moline and Alternates Stefanie Cunningham and Donna Resutek

ABSENT: Gilbert Gamboa

STAFF : Lisa Houlihan, Assistant Town Planner and Acting Recording Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:02p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

III. NEW BUSINESS: NONE

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Report: C-PACE Program (Commercial Property-Assessed Clean Energy)

Chairman Kelly explained that C-PACE is a program that offers low interest financing for businesses that invest in clean energy improvements. Lisa Houlihan, Assistant Town Planner, added that repayment is administered through the Tax Office and is a senior tax lien on the property. In order to offer this program to local businesses, the Town has to adopt a policy/ordinance. Recently, emails were sent to a group of local businesses to gauge their interest, but responses were minimal.

As noted at the last meeting, the Commission is interested in seeking additional feedback. Ms. Houlihan asked that action on this matter be tabled until next month to allow additional time to conduct mailings. By consensus action was postponed.

2. Report: Agricultural Initiatives

No report on this initiative, at this time.

3. Report: Business Directory

Thus far the Commission's budget request to fund an online business directory has received support from the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance, and is included in the proposed budget for fiscal year 2013/2014. The annual budget meeting is on May 14, 2013, and the budget referendum on May 21, 2013.

Ms. Houlihan spoke with GoLocal, the targeted provider for an online business directory, regarding the current status and is scheduled to speak with them after the referendum.

Discussion ensued regarding marketing. It was noted that minimal funding (\$100) is present to offer an internship to an Ellington High School student that could assist with a

business contact list. Commissioner Todd suggested working with the National Honor Society personnel at the High School.

4. Report: Business Surveys and Site Visits

Chairman Kelly noted the business questionnaires completed during business visits and provide a spreadsheet he compiled summarizing the key points from the questionnaires. The Commission was surprised to learn that the most common answer for business success in Town was due to sewer access. The most common answer regarding what the Town could do to enhance business is to create better development standards for and expand business along Route 83. The Commission discussed the benefits in connecting Main Street to Route 83, as well as Lower Butcher and Pinney Road.

Ms. Houlihan noted a sidewalk study the Director of Public Works recently initiated with UCONN and stated that the Route 83 Corridor Study will commence shortly. The Commission expressed interest in being closely involved in the process.

Chairman Kelly invited commissioners to review his report and address any comments or concerns next month.

5. Report: Tax Incentive Programs

Ms. Houlihan noted proposed House Bill 5718 concerning an act to grant municipal authority to provide tax abatement for residential development. The proposal reduces minimum cost of improvements from \$25,000 to \$10,000 and allows mixed-use development to be considered; it further clarifies rehabilitation areas.

The Commission may want to revisit the existing Tax Abatement Policy and enabling legislation for amendments to include rehab areas like Route 83 near Vernon.

Complete Streets was discussed, noting multiple benefits in making Route 83 pedestrian friendly.

6. Report: Current Economic Activity

Deer Valley North has started site work. It is approved for 120 new multi-family units on the north side of Windermere.

Ms. Houlihan noted a recent visit she received from a town resident that is looking to expand her existing home-based bakery to a larger commercial space (2,000 +/- sf). Ms. Houlihan noted the vacant space she was aware.

Ellington Realty, 89 West Road, has an application pending before the Planning and Zoning Commission for expansion of parking that will allow them to accommodate a mix of uses that require higher parking demands and allow 100% occupancy.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. Approval of the April 10, 2013, regular meeting minutes.
MOVED (HURLEY), SECONDED (TODD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE APRIL 10, 2013 MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.

2. Correspondence:

- a. **Letter to EDC from Randy Fiveash, Director of Tourism – 2013 Spring Travel Program.** So noted.

b. Corrections to the Tax Abatement Policy (Policy) handed in by Leo Miller, Selectman.

The Commission discussed Selectman Miller's recommendations as received on April 22, 2013, and recapped in an email dated May 6th.

The Commission is uncomfortable with replacing "of" with "in" in the second line under Purpose as it implies an actual fiscal disbursement from the Town versus mere tax abatement.

The second recommendation is to replace the term "estimated" with "based" stating that "the fixed assessment isn't an estimate". The Commission noted that at the time they are considering an application for abatement the cost of improvement is an estimate and noted that the Policy provides a step later in the process to confirm actual costs and adjust the agreement if needed.

The last recommendation involved adding commas in four separate locations within section a through c regarding assessment periods. The Commission agreed to add the commas as recommended.

In recognizing that Selectman Miller's comments will be reviewed by the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and their role in approving the language of the Policy, the Commission supports the BOS's judgment in accepting or declining the separate recommendations from Selectman Miller.

- c. Ms. Houlihan noted her recent attendance to the annual New England Economic Development Course (Course), as briefly discussed last month. The program discussed topics like financing start-ups, development and reuse, strategic economic plans, marketing, ethics, workforce issues and current economic influences. She noted her satisfaction with the Course and will provide a summary of the program next month.

Ms. Houlihan noted that she received a \$300 scholarship to pay for a portion of the Course through CEDAS, however the Course costs \$600 plus travel. The Commission reviewed their budget.

MOVED (TODD), SECONDED (KELLY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO REALLOCATE \$300 PLUS TRAVEL EXPENSES FROM ADVERTISING, PRINTING, FORMS TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO PAY FOR STAFF ATTENDANCE TO THE NEW ENGLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COURSE.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (HURLEY), SECONDED (TODD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN AT 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:



Lisa M. Houlihan
Acting Recording Secretary